

**Director's Report
for the June 2003 ODL Board Meeting**

On the Road Again. I have done a lot of traveling since the last ODL Board meeting. In April I participated in the four hearings on the guidelines documents you will be considering for approval. The hearings were held in McAlester, Bartlesville, Fairview, and Lawton. You will see more in the division reports about those hearings. Although the turnout was low at the hearings, I believe it is still important that we at ODL make it easy for library staff to let us know their reactions to our proposals. I reported on the comments made at the hearings to the Public Library Directors' Council which met in early May. The Public Library Directors' Council recommends the adoption of the document included in tab d. Likewise, the Youth Services Advisory Council considered recommendations made at the hearings on the new guidelines in tab e. They recommend the adoption of their document.

Other travel included my attendance at the National Library Legislative Day. This event is held in May of each year and provides an opportunity for librarians to visit Congressional offices to address legislative issues of interest to our profession. This year's Oklahoma delegation included Marilyn Hinshaw, Executive Director of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System (EODLS), Dr. Jo Lynn Digranes, Executive Vice President of Conners State College in Warner and Chair of the EODLS Board, Richard Parker, Deputy Director of the Tulsa City-Council Library System and his wife Charlotte formerly a school library media specialist in the Broken Arrow Public Schools, Jayme Seat, school library media specialist from Jackson Elementary School in the Norman Public Schools and chair of the Oklahoma School Library Media Specialists in Oklahoma, and myself. We were able to meet with Congressman Cole to discuss our issues but none of the rest of the Congressional delegation was available so we met with their education liaisons. My focus at these meetings is on the critical importance of federal funds for libraries. Each year we present a flyer on how federal library funds have been used in Oklahoma. You will find a copy of the flyer following my report. The president's budget recommended a 15% increase in federal funds for libraries and the Senate is recommending an even higher amount so we are hopeful that in these hard economic times for state budgets, the federal funds will help keep vital services going. Because of the current budget situation, I paid for this trip myself. I consider it an investment in ODL's ability to serve our customers.

Another trip that I made was to Ardmore for the Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO) Board retreat at the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation conference center. Julia Brady Ratliffe, a former ODL Board member, planned the FOLIO Board retreat and one of our new ODL Board members, Glenda Kilmer, was also a participant. This is a wonderful group of volunteers who love libraries and have made the improvement of library service statewide as a priority. I was invited to speak about the funding of Oklahoma libraries. Donna Skvarla spoke about the changes she has seen in the public libraries in the state during her time at ODL. Other speakers included the leadership of the Oklahoma Library Association who talked about their goals for libraries in

Oklahoma. It was a beautiful setting and a very productive meeting. I believe the FOLIO Board plans to make a retreat an annual occurrence to allow them the time and concentration to focus on their goals for the coming year.

A fun event I attended was the Pioneer Library System forty-fifth anniversary celebration. The founding director of the Pioneer Library System, Bill Lowery, was in attendance and former staff and Board members were recognized, including ODL Board member, Judi Knapp. The Pioneer Library Staff are very creative people and always find a humorous way to convey important information about their system and services. This year they had a song with slides that showed the growth of the system and the range of services offered to customers. It was a wonderful evening that celebrated the things that libraries and library staff can add to the quality of life in communities.

Finally, I attended the grand opening of the Hardesty Regional Library System in Tulsa. This new building is over 50,000 square feet and is located in south Tulsa. The event was on Sunday, May 18th and was the first day the library was open to the public. The building was packed with people anxious to see the new facility and to use the library. The Tulsa Library Commissioners are planning an initiative to build a new Central Library in the downtown area and see the Hardesty Library as a symbol of the new type of library they want to provide the residents of Tulsa county. Several of the speakers at the opening ceremony talked about the need for something positive for Tulsa in the midst of the economic hard times they have been experiencing. Two more branches are scheduled to be re-opening in the next few months after being remodeled. If you are in Tulsa, I encourage you to visit the Hardesty Library. It is a significant achievement in terms of architectural design and presence.

Other meetings. One of my roles as Director of ODL is to serve on the Archives and Records Commission. Like the ODL Board, the Archives and Records Commission Board is a governing board. The other members of the Commission serve on the Board either as an appointee of the Governor or by virtue of their election as State Treasurer, State Auditor and Inspector, and Lieutenant Governor. The ex officio members have a designee from their agency to represent them and members of the Commission meet quarterly. At those meetings, state agencies present schedules of proposed records to be retained, destroyed or reorganized. It is a complex but important role that ODL provides through the Archives and Records Commission for the management of state records. I attended the April meeting of the Commission as a voting member. When I have a conflict in my schedule with the Commission meetings, either Vicki Sullivan or Gary Harrington is my designee.

Budget. As I write this report, the budget process is still underway. The Senate has contacted us with the final numbers for our budget next year but the bill has not been passed yet. Since the appropriations bills are almost always passed as the General Conference Committee on Appropriations recommends, however, I feel fairly confident that these numbers will be approved. The figures are for a 2.9% reduction from our current appropriation. I regard this as worthy of celebration. The legislature was faced with very hard choices this year and even if we received a further reduction, it was a

much smaller reduction than it could have been. We will be able to absorb this reduction by increased use of federal funds for our statewide catalog and will not have to reduce state aid or eliminate any statewide licenses for electronic resources.

Board appreciation. By now, you should have all received my letter about the lunch following our next ODL Board meeting. I hope you will be able to stay for the lunch. At our last Board meeting, the Board discussed their concerns about the impact of the budget reductions on the ODL staff. This lunch will be an expression of the staff's appreciation of the support of the Board during these difficult times. It will be an opportunity for you to get acquainted with more of the ODL staff as well. I look forward to seeing you on June 6th.

Personal Note. At this Board meeting, we will be saying "thank you" and Godspeed to two of our ODL Board members. Clyde Petete and James Carter will complete their term of service on the Board at the end of June 2003. I always find it difficult to say goodbye to the ODL Board members when the term ends because I have come to cherish the gifts they bring to their service on the Board. Clyde has been a warm, inclusive member on the Board with strong concerns about First Amendment issues. James had a low key attention to detail that helped us identify mistakes in proposed rules that we thought we had proof read to death as well as a gift for thinking through complex issues facing the Board. How can we possibly say thank you to Clyde and James? At the Pioneer Library System dinner, I had an inspiration. The former Pioneer staff and Board members are referred to as Pioneer Ambassadors recognizing their role as good will spokespersons for Pioneer Library System and public libraries. I believe that ODL should "borrow" this concept and term to designate our former Board members as still part of the ODL family. We hope that Clyde and James will carry the word of the good things libraries and ODL can provide to the citizens of Oklahoma. We want to thank you for your steadfast service and wish you well in your future endeavors.